

COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULB RECYCLING - NOW AVAILABLE

Takoma Park now offers a drop-off for recycling compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFL's. CFL's can be dropped off at the Public Works Facility, 31 Oswego Avenue. Office hours are 8:30 am to 5 pm, however a drop-off box for the CFL's is located adjacent to the front door of the facility for after-hour or weekend drop-offs.

Compact fluorescent lights require less energy to operate than incandescent bulbs. However, each CFL bulb contains about 4 mg of mercury. If the bulb remains intact and is recycled that mercury can be collected and reused. If the bulb is broken, the mercury can be released into the environment.

Coincidentally the use of CFL's in lighting actually reduces the amount of mercury potentially coming into the environment. A CFL uses 75% less energy to operate than an incandescent bulb and lasts 6 times longer. A power plant will emit 10 mg of mercury to produce the electricity to power an incandescent bulb for 5 years compared to 2.4 mg to run a CFL for the same amount of time.*

While the CFL's used in your home are not legally considered hazardous waste, it is best to dispose of them through a recycling operation rather than throwing them in the trash, especially when trash is incinerated as it is in Montgomery County. The City has partnered with USA Light's a local Beltsville company for this program.

There is currently no charge to drop off a CFL for recycling at the Public Works Facility. As the program develops, the City may consider requesting a small payment to offset the cost of the program, depending upon participation by the community.

If you break a CFL, the EPA recommends that you open a nearby window to disperse any vapor, sweep up the fragments and wipe the area with a disposable paper towel to remove glass fragments. Do not use a vacuum cleaner. Place all fragments and used paper towel in a sealed plastic bag. The broken bulb can be taken to the recycling drop-off provided the plastic bag is intact and sealed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (301) 891-7633.

* Information from US Environmental Protection Agency Fact Sheet.